

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOCIALIST RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST

PARTIES: COMMENTS OF RUI MATEUS

REF: (A) STATE 007807 (DTG 131616Z JAN 76)

(B) STATE 007791 (DTG 131549Z JAN 76)(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO RUI MATEUS, CHIEF OF SOCIALIST PARTY
INTERNATIONAL DIVISION, THE SOCIALIST STRATEGY IN SOUTHERN
EUROPE IS DESIGNED TO MAKE INROADS INTO COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICAL
SUPPORT. IN PORTUGAL THE APPROPRIATE TACTIC IS TO ISOLATE THE
COMMUNISTS BY DEMONSTRATING THEIR INTRANSIGENCE. IN SPAIN AND
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ITALY, THE SOCIALISTS MUST BE WILLING TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNISTS
WHILE MOVING TO ERODE THEIR SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH FOR TACTICAL

REASONS, SOARES AND OTHER PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST LEADERS DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN LOCAL COMMUNISTS AND THOSE OF THE BERLINGUER VARIETY, IN PRIVATE THEY MAKE NO SUCH DISTINCTION.
END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A BREAKFAST MEETING JAN 3 WITH SENATE STAFF MEMBER ROBERT HUNTER AND EMBOFF, SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) INTERNATIONAL DIVISION CHIEF RUI MATEUS COMMENTED ON THE SOCIALISTS' OVERALL STRATEGY FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE. THE STRATEGY, HE SAID, WAS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE POWER BY MAKING INROADS INTO COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICAL SUPPORT. IT WAS DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE WAS A VIABLE NON-COMMUNIST ALTERNATIVE ON THE LEFT. IN PORTUGAL, THE GOAL WAS TO RELEGATE THE COMMUNISTS TO THE STATUS OF A FIVE PERCENT PARTY.

2. BUT, MATEUS OBSERVED, THE SOCIALISTS MUST GEAR THEIR TACTICS TO DIFFERING NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. IN PORTUGAL, THE APPROPRIATE-TACTIC WAS TO ISOLATE THE COMMUNISTS BY DEMONSTRATING THEIR INTRANSIGENCE.

IN ITALY AND SPAIN, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOCIALISTS MUST BE WILLING TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNISTS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ERODE THEIR SUPPORT. AN ISOLATION POLICY IN THESE COUNTRIES WOULD NOT BE CREDIBLE ACCORDING TO MATEUS, SINCE THE COMMUNIST PARTIES HAD ALREADY DEMONSTRATED TO THE SATISFACTION OF BROAD SEGMENTS OF THE ELECTORATE THAT THEY WERE WILLING "TO PLAY THE DEMOCRATIC GAME."

THE SOCIALISTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES EVENTUALLY MUST WIN ON THE BASIS OF PROGRAMMATIC APPEAL.

3. MATEUS SAID THAT IN SPAIN, THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (PSOE) WAS, LIKE THE OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES, SUFFERING ACUTE GROWING PAINS. ITS LEADER, FELIPE GONZALES, WAS YOUNG AND IMPETUOUS. THE PARTY, UNDER GONZALES, WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN MAKING THE ADJUSTMENT FROM CLANDESTINITY. THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS' OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO GATHER ALL ELEMENTS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFT INTO A SINGLE OPPOSITION COALITION. ENRIQUE GALVAN, LEADER OF THE LESS SIGNIFICANT POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP), WAS A MUCH MORE PROMISING LEADER, BUT GONZALEZ HAD THE DECIDED EDGE THROUGH THE PSOE'S EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIALIST
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INTERNATIONAL.

4. EVENTS IN PORTUGAL, MATEUS CONCLUDED, COULD HAVE A DECISIVE IMPACT ON EUROPEAN POLITICS. SHOULD PORTUGAL MOVE AGAIN TO THE RIGHT, THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM WOULD BE DRIVEN TO THE LEFT. ONE OF THE CASUALTIES, MATEUS SAID, WOULD BE MITTERAND'S POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO MOVE TO POWER AT THE HEAD OF A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMUNISTS. A SWING TO THE RIGHT IN PORTUGAL WOULD DRIVE MITTERAND AND THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS CLOSER TO THE COMMUNISTS. IN SHORT, A MOVE TO THE

RIGHT IN PORTUGAL WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO EUROPE THAT A NON-COMMUNIST, SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE ON THE LEFT WAS NOT VIABLE.

5. COMMENT: MATEUS VIEWS SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST RELATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY OPTIC. HIS ANALYSIS MAY IN PART REFLECT AN ATTEMPT TO RATIONALIZE CONTINUED PS OVERTURES TO COMMUNIST PARTIES IN SPAIN AND ITALY. THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS HAVE PLAYED THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNISTS PARTIES IN BOTH COUNTRIES FOR MAXIMUM DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT -- CONTRASTING THE "FLEXIBILITY" OF THE SPANISH AND ITALIAN PARTIES WITH THE INTRANSIGENCE OF CUNHAL AND THE PCP. SOARES'S RECENTLY-REITERATED CALL FOR A MEETING OF PORTUGUESE, FRENCH, SPANISH, AND ITALIAN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNIST PARTIES, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS A TACTICAL MANEUVER DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS CUNHAL, WHOSE UNWILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A CONFERENCE WAS WELL-KNOWN BEFOREHAND. WHILE SOARES AND OTHER PS LEADERS CONTINUE PUBLICLY TO DRAW DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS AND THOSE OF THE BERLINGUER VARIETY, IN PRIVATE THEY MAKE NO SUCH DISTINCTIONS.

6. THE ABOVE DISCUSSION WAS HELD PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFS A AND B. AS INSTRUCTED BY REFTELS, EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE KNOWN US POSITION ON THIS ISSUE, ESPECIALLY

IN LIGHT OF FORTHCOMING HELSINGOR MEETING.

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